

TRIBUNE



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TRIBUNE

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Letter From The Editor

ONCE AGAIN, this week, we feature a palmyrah-based photograph on our front cover. Last week we had a picture of a small part of a jungle of palmyrah trees—a sight which has become rare today. And, unless a vigorous and sustained campaign of replanting is started immediately, the palmyrah plant may become a thing of the past. To ensure the economic future of the North (Jaffna), East (Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Hambantota) and the West (Mannar and Puttalam), on a longrange basis, one of the things that must be done is to rehabilitate the palmyrah. In this issue we publish the second instalment of the Report of the Palmyrah Committee and it describes, in some detail, the many uses to which different products and parts of the palmyrah palm have been put to not only by the Tamils in Ceylon and South India but also in countries like Malaysia and Thailand where the palmyrah grows in plenty. In the report we have published this week there is a reference to a product called in Tamil *pinatu*—something which the last two or three generations of young Tamil people have not known except as a memory of the past. This product from the juice of the ripe palmyrah fruit—juice squeezed out to be dried into a semi-hardened jam—was a high-caloric staple (breakfast) food. For many years in recent times, nobody had bothered about the ripe palmyrah fruit which was left for free-ranging cattle to chew or to rot at the bottom of the trees for flies to breed in plenty. In the last two years, however, there is a new interest in *pinatu* just as there is an interest in other products of the palmyrah palm. The picture we publish, which depicts a scene over fifty years ago, shows the old and crude (by modern standards) method of making *pinatu*. The thick juice is squeezed on to the mats on the raised stands and the seeds are kept aside to be buried to produce *Kottaikilangu* (*odiyal* and *pullukodiyal*, as well). There is no reason why the manufacture of *pinatu* cannot be sophisticated into a modern hygienic process under semi-factory conditions. Fifty years ago and earlier, when pollution of the kind which has become a menace now was unknown—with the population being a fraction of what it is—this method of *pinatu* manufacture did not have the hazards which may arise if *pinatu* is made in the same way today in overcrowded Jaffna. But mother nature has her own way of protecting natural products from bacteria—because if this were not so all those who drink palmyrah toddy (under the auspices and the blessings of the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Sri Lanka) should become heir to all the diseases carried by flies and other vermin. Under the old tree tax system, a tapper sold his toddy to small groups of tappers under a tree and the trade was spread out over thousands of such tree-side taverns all over the Jaffna peninsula. Under this (old) system there was little chance for flies and other infection-carrying pest to congregate in their millions as they do now in the filthy and dirty taverns (euphemistically called co-operatives of producers) to which consumers are compelled to go for a drink. This is what some political pundits of one brand have chosen to call the *proletarianisation* of the toddy consumers of Jaffna, where all, big and small, rich and poor, high caste and low caste, are made to grovel in unclean evil-smelling squat-ins which are called taverns. These present-days taverns have moreover become the meeting place for the thugs and underworld of each locality to gather and discuss their plans. These thugs have also developed a side-line business of carrying toddy in bottles to people who find it difficult to go to the taverns. A study will show that no *proletarianisation* has taken place of the general mass of the toddy-drinking population but that thugs and other underworld stalwarts have developed a lucrative new line of business in supplying toddy from the taverns to others who are willing to pay a premium to drink their toddy in the comfort of their homes or without the hurly-burly of the Finance Ministry (LSSP) ordained taverns. All this apart, it is necessary to remember that the Tamil areas and the Tamils are in need of major economic rehabilitation. For a long time, the Tamils had flourished on employment in the public sector, but this industry is no longer there to satisfy the growing number of Tamil youth. The Tamil areas are the least developed in Sri Lanka, except for agriculture in parts of the Jaffna peninsula. The Federal Party, which had won electoral support in the Tamil areas, never had any concrete economic development programmes or policies for the Tamils or the Tamil areas—the seemingly emotional FP appeal for language was really to ensure employment in the public service. But, the sad default of the FP is no reason for the Government not to do something. The distribution of crumbs and plums on the basis of patronage politics will not go far. Experience has shown that. And unless there is major economic development in the Tamil areas, frustration and desperation will become endemic among Tamil youth—with the attendant evil of being attracted to anarchic logic and terroristic ideology.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Euphoria About
Land Takeover

THE GOVERNMENT, especially the SLFP, seems to be doing its best to induce an atmosphere of permanent euphoria (something akin to the permanent revolution of some theorists) about the taking-over of the big publicly owned estates. What the protagonists do not seem to realise is that the way the propaganda is being done it is more likely to induce sectarian Kandyian euphoria whilst leaving all other sections of the community in Sri Lanka out in the cold. What is being stressed is that the land plundered from the Kandyian "peasants" by the imperialists was being restored to them. The objective of such propaganda is no doubt to win electoral support among the Kandyans as well as promote a political euphoria among all sections of the people on the basis of another stride towards "socialism", but whether is objective is likely to be achieved is yet to be seen.

This attempt will no doubt meet with some degree of success among the Kandyans on emotional grounds and it is also likely that some Kandyans (and even Low Country Sinhalese settled in the hill country) who will receive land in the new distribution—where parts of even the best-run tea plantations are likely to be fragmented for "village expansion schemes"—will be submerged in a temporary euphoria as "owners" of land.

But unless this re-distribution of land will enable the allottees to increase their money income substantially as a result of utilising the land, the present euphoria (if it does really exist at all) is not likely to last very long. It is one thing to distribute land and help the allottees to put a house to live in, but it is a totally different matter to ensure that the land so distributed is utilised in a more profitable way than before—or is utilised at the same level of profitability as before.

It will be good for the Government to realise that the takeover of the publicly and foreign owned

estates has enthused mainly the political pundits in all communities as a further victory against "imperialism" and as a step towards "socialism." But unless this act of nationalisation will lead to an economic upsurge within a short time, the emotional euphoria even among the politically-inclined, which the Government may succeed in inducing on a temporary basis, will vanish into thin air. For the rest, in the country as a whole the takeover of the estates is being watched as another "experiment"—with fears that the takeover might lead to an economic decline even in the production of the major export crops. Except for a few Kandyian and Low-country Sinhalese who might benefit from a distribution of the land into small parcels, no one else will immediately receive any benefits even of an intangible kind. (Except that a few of those who are politically connected with governmental authority and the new authorities in the plantations might also be able to get jobs at different levels and thus feel happy—even if these jobs are only redundant sinecures).

Unless the Government is able to establish and operate a machinery to utilise profitably the million acres taken over since 1972 (550 thousand acres under the first takeover and 450 thousand acres now), the emotional euphoria of the land reform policy might turn into a dangerous electoral boomerang. This statement is not a threat inspired by "reactionary" promptings, but a statement of a stark reality.

AT THE MOMENT, a great deal of speechmaking is going on about the manner in which the lands taken over would be managed, about the benefits the country would receive, and so on and so forth. Sermons are also being preached calling upon estate superintendents and the like to ensure good work and high production. All this is very welcome, and all people of goodwill in Sri Lanka today will wish and hope that the Government will be able—even through the two-year Agency House management—to deliver the goods. But if people have doubts on this matter, they cannot be blamed because of the record of governmental operations in the field of nationalised ventures in recent years.

In the current euphoria, which official propaganda has induced to envelop at least all governmental top dignitaries, many people who should know better may lose touch with the down-to-earth realities. The common people of this country (the overwhelming majority of whom will not benefit by any land distribution whereas a number of them will lose the jobs they hold in the plantations and the agency houses which have been taken over) are now in a *wait-and-watch* mood. They know that the LSSP, once a partner in the Government, has openly expressed fears from public platforms that the SLFP will not be able to manage or utilise the estates taken over. The UNP too has expressed similar fears on a much lower key.

It is not that the common people prefer private enterprise to public sector enterprise. What they want is profitable results and tangible economic improvement in their lot which has hit a rockbottom unknown before owing to the high prices of all essentials. (Even the simple ayurvedic decoction and *kasaya* costs three times as much—mainly on the excuse that FEECs were charged on the ingredients imported from outside). People extol the virtues of private enterprise only because of the manifest inefficiency, corruption and rotten administration in many public sector enterprises.

With the takeover of a million acres of developed land—land developed in the times of the imperialists and the colonialists—the Government is on trial as to whether it can do a better job than the imperialists and the brown sahibs who had succeeded them. Re-distribution in small allotments will satisfy land and political hunger, but there is not enough land to give the 13,000,000 Sri Lankans (and more to come) enough land even to satisfy their emotional cravings for land.

The question is simply whether this Government will be able to lay the foundation of profitable and economic utilisation of these one million acres so that the common man will be able to get a wee bit more than he did under the imperialists and even the brown sahibs. Mere ownership—individual, collective, co-operative or

even national—will not fill stomachs or provide clothes or housing. It is utilisation that will count and it is on this on which the Government will stand or fall.

Moreover, in the current euphoria there is a great deal of (pardonable) re-writing of history which will not be accepted either by those who know or by posterity which has a way of getting at the truth. For instance, it has been claimed that the 75,000 acres of the finest tea lands in the Nuwara Eliya district was on land "plundered" from the Kandyan peasants. History knows that at the time of the "plunder" there were no peasants in what is now known as the Nuwara Eliya district. It was prime virgin forest where only a sambhur and the cheetah had roamed. The only human beings were a few forest hermits and an occasional settlement in the lower reaches of the plateau.

It is a historical fact that the "imperialists" and colonialists had developed this land and turned them into foreign exchange earning tea estates with the help of imported Indian labour. At that time the population of the Kandyan areas were not enough to populate this district especially because agriculture was mainly confined to the plains below. Whether these forests around Nuwara Eliya should have been kept as forest reserves (in the interest of agriculture on the plains) is another matter, but the fact is that the land in the Nuwara Eliya district was virgin jungle land when taken over from the nominal ownership of Kandyan chieftains.

There are many other historical inaccuracies which are being aired in the current attempt to induce a political euphoria. This is neither the time nor the place to go into them, but political leaders cannot do themselves any harm (in fact it will be better for their reputations in posterity) if they do not go into obvious exaggerations which can come back upon them. This is not a world in which the word of the politician in power is any longer taken for gospel. Every elections (and every revolution) brings changes and this is something which politicians should remember.

THE REMOVAL OF THE BAN on the transport and sale of paddy and rice has induced yet another dangerous euphoria in certain circles. Many of those who had seen virtue in the ban are now crowing about the benefits from the removal of the ban. The *Daily News* is now full of stories about the drop in the price of rice in many areas. On 3.10.75 it reported as follows:

The price of rice in the open market dropped by over 25 per cent after the removal of restrictions late last week on the transport, possession and sale of rice by the private sector. A measure of local rice, which was earlier sold in the blackmarket at Rs. 4.50 was available in the open market during the week-end at Rs. 3. The man who initiated the move to remove the "rice barrier", Mr. Felix R. Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and of Justice, said yesterday that he was glad the price of rice had come down. Asked what motivated him to lift the ban which has put back rice in the open market, Mr. Bandaranaike said: "I thought it was the correct thing to do."

A spokesman for the Ministry of Food, Co-operatives and Small Industries, told the "Daily News" yesterday that the price of rice should come down further, gradually. He said that with the next harvest rice should be available in the open market at much cheaper rates than at present. Meanwhile, Mr. S. K. K. Suriarachchi, Minister of Food, Co-operatives and Small Industries has directed the Food Controller to take steps to allocate supplies of paddy, rice, wheat flour and sugar to merchants and distributors in all parts of the country, and to organise and administer a system of rationing of these allocations.

There is no doubt that the Government has very wisely and very correctly decided to keep the paddy and rice trade in the sphere of "mixed economy". It has been shown that the Government is not yet able to handle this trade as a sole monopoly. They are no doubt many defects and malpractices which stem from the fact that a part of this trade is handled by the private trader, but the public sector part (the PMB and before it the GPS) was set up in order to curb and check the private trade. If the PMB dis-

charges its obligations fairly and honestly, then the consumer will stand to benefit a great deal. It is only when the PMB falls down on its job that the private trader can cheat the producer and the consumer.

The *Daily News* on October 20 reported under the heading **PRICE OF RICE PLUMMETS AFTER BAN WAS LIFTED.**

The governments decision to remove all restrictions on the possession, sale and transportation of paddy and rice with effect from October 8, has had an immediate impact on the price of rice in the open market. In some places people have been able to buy rice at prices less than the price of the second measure of rice available on the ration books (that is, Rs. 2.10). One such place according to a report was Koslande where one consumer bought a couple of measures at Rs. 1.75 each. Here are a few reports from the outstations.

Bulathsinhala: The price of rice now is between Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 2.50 compared to Rs. 3.75 a measure just before the ban were removed. **Polpitimukalana:** A measure of samba rice previously sold at Rs. 4.50 has come down to Rs. 2.50—Rs. 3.00 a measure.

Matale: The price of rice has fallen and is still falling since the removal of the ban. Earlier the price of a measure was Rs. 3.50 to Rs. 3.85 but the price now is between Rs. 3 to Rs. 3.25. **Matara:** Earlier prices in various areas were between Rs. 3.50 and Rs. 4.25 a measure. After the lifting of the ban, the prices have come down to between Rs. 2.60 to Rs. 3 per measure. **Dehiwela:** The free market price is now Rs. 2.25—Rs. 3.00 whereas it was between Rs. 3.25—Rs. 4.00 a measure.

Ahangama: The price of a measure has come down to Rs. 2.40 from Rs. 3.75.

This report is confined to rice deficit areas. A truer picture will emerge when the prices in the rice producing and surplus areas are also recorded. In such districts, the prices have moved upwards thus enabling the producer to get an economic price in the current state of the rice market in Sri Lanka.

If the bureaucrats do not start any other gimmick to obstruct production—and if the weather

gods do not decide otherwise—there is no reason why the country should not achieve minimal production targets next year. With the 200,000 tons of rice from China under the new Rice and Rubber Agreement, there is no doubt that there will be sufficient rice in the country to keep prices of off-ration rice at reasonable levels. This will be so because of the plenty in PL 480 flour which is already choking our stores—and there is every prospect that the USA will be inclined to extend more assistance in form of the PL 480 flour next year as well. In these circumstances it will be seen that there is no likelihood of a food crisis in 1976. But unless production goes up in a dramatic and drastic way, the country is likely to return to a new era of recurrent food crises, in the years there after.

The LSSP has warned the nation that the removal of the ban on the sale and transport of paddy and rice would enable the errant and greedy trader to corner the stocks and thus push up the prices. This danger no doubt exists, and will no doubt continue to exist, until production of paddy goes up to the point where the trader cannot indulge in such sharp practices.

What the Government has to ensure is that production of paddy will go up. Speeches of politicians alone cannot do this. Sermons to bureaucrats will not bring about a green revolution. The new janawasas, collective farms, co-operative farms, youth council farms and the old state farms, on the one hand, and the new peasant allottees and the older farming community, on the other, must be induced to produce more. The question is simply this: what inducements can be offered to them individually and severally to produce more? The price of Rs. 33 a bushel of paddy is alone not enough—this is a hard reality which Government must realise.

What else must be done?
What else can be done?



FOR THE RECORD

**Nationalisation
Of Estates**

This is the text (English translation) of the Prime Minister's broadcast message issued last night (October 14, 1975) by the Department of Information.

"Today is a historic day. In fulfilment of the pledge given by us to the people before the general election of 1970, we were able to free our island of Sri Lanka from its subjugation to the British Crown and make it a free, sovereign and independent Republic under a new Constitution on May 22, 1972. We were proud that we were able to hoist our national flag at the spot where it was unfurled by the British. Politically this was a significant achievement, but economically several other measures had to be taken. In this connection, I would like to mention that fertile land is the principal wealth of a nation. Such land particularly those belonging to the rural population in the upcountry, was taken over by foreigners and subsequently purchased from them at very low prices by foreign companies which converted them into huge profit-making concerns.

Today we are proud of the fact that these lands have come back into the possession of the nation. Since 1956 we have implemented a large number of progressive measures. Up to that time the freedom that we had won was limited. But in keeping with our position as a proud and truly independent nation, the bases at Katunayake and Trincomalee which were occupied by the British were taken over and the way was paved for the achievement of our real freedom. We were able from then on to march forward towards the achievement of economic independence so that we could stand up as a free nation among the other nations of the world. Today we have reached the culmination of that endeavour. I do not propose to explain to you how those lands which we have nationalised today were taken over by the foreigners

or how they enjoyed enormous profits from those lands. The far-reaching steps taken to rectify the state of affairs created by the imperialists and to develop our national economy bring immense benefits to future generations. This wealth being one of our principal revenue earning sources will be the national wealth from today, not subject to any foreign interference. I wish to convey my grateful thanks to all those who extended their co-operation to us in our attempt to nationalise these lands. It is our firm objective to stabilise the victory we have achieved today and to work for the progress of the nation. I look forward to your co-operation to reach that goal.

May the blessing of the Triple Gem be with you."

—Ceylon Daily News, 15/10/75

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CHRONICLE

Oct. 17 — Oct. 23

A DIARY OF EVENTS IN SRI LANKA AND THE WORLD
COMPILED FROM DAILY NEWSPAPERS
PUBLISHED IN COLOMBO.

CDN—Ceylon Daily News; CDM—Ceylon Daily Mirror; CO—Ceylon Observer; TOCSL—Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated; DM—Dinamina; LD—Lankadipa; JD—Janadina; VK—Virakesari; ATH—Aththa; SM—Silumina; SLD—Sri Lankadipa; JS—Janasathiya.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17: The Speaker of the NSA, Mr. Stanley Tillekeratne, will sign the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill today which vests all public company owned estates in the Land Reform Commission: today, nearly 2,500 government servants will be deployed all over the island on a verification of such estates in the country: these public servants were specially briefed on how the verification should be conducted—CDN. In a first revenue measure introduced by the new Minister of Finance, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, the tobacco tax has been increased by Rs. 5 per pound and this has resulted in an increase of one cent on every cigarette: the Government anticipates an increase in revenue of Rs. 10 million by this tax—CDN. There was a demonstration outside the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation head office in Colombo yesterday by some employees who protested against the interdiction of the President and the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Independent Petroleum Employees Union and according to the Chairman of the Corporation this demonstration did not interrupt the supplies of petroleum products—CDN. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, yesterday interdicted the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Kenneth Seneviratne: this interdiction is a sequel to an incident reported to have taken place in appeal case that came up before a bench of the Supreme Court—CDM. According to the *Daily Mirror* the take-over of banks is almost a certainty and the Government is working out the details of the take-over. According to the Examination Department no definite instructions have been received regarding the admission of students to the University who qualified in the GCE A Level examination—CDM. Mr. Nissanka Wijeyaratne, a Member of the Press Council, resigned: according to the *Aththa* Mr. Wijeyaratne has taken this decision because the Government-owned Lake House and the Times Group which has high Governmental connections have insulted Mr. Wijeyaratne and he intends taking legal action against these two institutions. Mr. S. K. K. Suriyarachchi, Minister of Food, Small Industries and Co-operatives, left for Bulgaria yesterday—VK. President Ford has not changed his plans to visit Peking this year despite China's allegations that the U.S. is supporting Tibetan exile groups in the United States. Soviet Communist Party Chief, Leonid Brezhnev, called off talks he was due to hold with President Valery Giscard d'Estaing and then he failed to join the French leader at a Kremlin concert in the visitor's honour

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18: The physical take-over of the estates which came under the Land Reform (Amendment) Bill which commenced yesterday went on smoothly and according to the *Daily News* when

officers entrusted with the task of inventorising arrived at the gates of various estates they were met by cheering workers and estate staff who co-operated with the Government servants. Mr. Kenneth Seneviratne, the interdicted Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, tendered an apology at the special sitting of the Supreme Court yesterday for the derogatory remarks he had made against Mr. Justice Sharvananda during the hearing of an appeal in a bribery case on Wednesday and for refusing to adduce further arguments at the hearing when called upon to do so—CDN. Mr. Lakshman Jayakody, Deputy Minister of Defence and Foreign Affairs, told a press conference yesterday that substantial foreign assistance has been pledged to Sri Lanka for the holding of the Non-Aligned Conference next August—CDN. Mr. Lakshman Jayakody further told the press conference that there is positive evidence of militant terrorist groups in the Northern province and also evidence that the recent murder of the Mayor of Jaffna was politically motivated—VK. According to the *Daily Mirror* the country wants an answer whether the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation struck oil at Pesalal or not. Asian members of the United Nations have nominated Sri Lanka Ambassador H. Shirley Amerasinghe, for the Presidency of next year's U.N. General-Assembly—CDM. At the UNP office in Kandy the President of the party Mr. J. R. Jayewardene will meet the student leaders of the Peradeniya Campus of the University—CDM. Mr. Neale de Alwis Deputy Minister of Finance, speaking at a meeting in Panadura said that Dr. N. M. Perera, former Minister of Finance and the leader of the LSSP, has contributed much to the welfare of the nation and he has also sacrificed a lot but it was the serious blunders made by the LSSP that had put the party into this position today: Mr. Alwis said the first blunder the LSSP made was campaigning for citizenship for all persons of Indian origin and the second was to have asked for parity for the Tamil language—CDM. The LSSP will hold a mass rally in Kandy today—JD. According to a survey conducted by the Department of Education several parents find it difficult to buy their children the necessary school texts mainly because they are out of print and whatever available for sale are beyond their purse—ATH. A son of a top ranking politician and his brother was arrested at the Katunayake International Airport yesterday when they carried two parcels of gems worth several lakhs of rupees just before their departure from the country—LD. The Chairman of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation told the *Virakesari* that the demonstration by a section of the employees of the Corporation who protested against the interdiction of two trade union leaders was utter failure. King Hassan of Morocco announced last night that he has organised a massive but peaceful march into the Spanish Sahara and challenged Spain to stop it. Australian Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, in a Parliamentary speech accused the Opposition of political immorality. Democratic Senator Edward Kennedy accused the US Administration of callously ignoring the fate of people removed from British-owned Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia to make way for US-British defence facilities.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19: When the Delimitation Commission begin sittings tomorrow at the Colombo Municipal Council premises religious bodies will give

evidence first: the UNP, LSSP and the TUF will give evidence before the commission in the early part of November—CO. Under the Sri Lanka-US Agreement the Agency for International Development has set apart 8 million dollars as a loan to Sri Lanka: this loan which is repayable in forty years will be used for the import of urea to the country—CO. The four lighthouses in the country run by the Imperial Lighthouse Service of Britain will be taken over by the Sri Lanka Navy on January 1, next year—CO. The Department of Registration of Persons will issue identity cards for school children sitting public examinations at Rs. 3—CO. Even after the take-over of the company owned estates the Government will continue to sell a part of the teas through the London Tea Market—ST. Mr. Hector Kobbekaduwa, Minister of Agriculture and Lands told a deputation of planters who assured him of their fullest co-operation in implementing the Government's policy that there will be no victimisation and interference in the administration of properties: the Minister further said that properties which were vested would for a time continue to be under the control and supervision of the same agency houses as statutory trustee—ST. In a survey conducted by the Police, medical and other interested anti narcotic organisations in a leading girls school in Colombo 22 girls have admitted that they are addicts of dangerous drugs: Out of 340 girls who were interviewed several others have admitted that they have used drugs—SLD. The Government will soon appoint a highranking committee consisting members of all nationalities to ensure the smooth selection to the university: this committee has been suggested by the Minister of Education Dr. Badiuddin Mahmud—VK. Police used tear gas on people who arrived in a procession for a UNP public rally in Matale last Friday—VK. Mr. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam, Leader of the FP, addressing a meeting at Bambalapitiya on Friday said that the TUF has definite plan to create a separate State for the Tamil speaking people of the country—VK. The *Janasathiya* reproduced an article from the *Sunday Standard* of India in which it has been stated that the Prime Minister got rid of the LSSP not because of the Hartal Commemoration meeting speech of Dr. N. M. Perera but because of the agitation made by the LSSP on nationalisation of several projects. The *Janasathiya* editorially commenting on this article of the *Sunday Standard* which was entitled "Sri Lanka Turns Right", said though this Government misleads the masses of the country the foreign critics are well aware of the Government's true intention. Arab foreign Ministers ended an emergency meeting on the Lebanon crisis with an appeal to the country's warring factions to exercise restraint: 18 of the Arab League's 21 members attended this meeting.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20: A Five-man committee has been appointed yesterday to make the selection to the various campuses of the University: the members of the committee are Dr. V. K. Samaranyake, Professor of Mathematics, Colombo Campus; Dr. N. Kodagoda, Co-Professor of Forensic Medicine, Colombo Campus; Professor T. Thurairajah, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Peradeniya Campus; Dr. Kamal Karunanayake, Registrar of the University; and Mr. Amir Ali, Lecturer Economics, Peradeniya Campus: Mr. G. J. Wijetunga, Deputy Registrar, will function as Secretary to the committee—CDN. Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, Minister of Finance and Justice, will be the chief spokesman for the SLFP when the party makes

representations before the Delimitation Commission in November—CDN. Mr. P. A. Sirisena, leader of the SLFP trade union in the Tyre Corporation, was interdicted by the Chairman: this is the third interdiction of SLFP trade union leaders within a week and according to the *Daily Mirror* these interdictions have caused a major flutter in the trade union devotees of the SLFP. Under a contract for 1975 the United States has supplied Sri Lanka with 101,280 tons of wheat flour—CDM. Addressing the undergraduates and lecturers at the UNP office in Kandy Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, leader of the UNP, said that Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, cannot become a leader overnight by basking in the glory of the great leaders like late Mr. Dudley Senanayake and Mr. D. S. Senanayake: the breakaway group of the UNP headed by Mr. Jinadasa Niyathapala and Mr. J. R. P. Suriapperuma has now formed a new political party known as the Janasammatha United National Party and these two leaders expect the followers of late Mr. Dudley Senanayake throughout the country to join them—CDM. Several muslim leaders including Dr. Alhaj Badiuddin Mahmud, Minister of Education, and Alhaj Faleel A Gaffoor, UNP MP for Colombo Central, will jointly form a Muslim United Front: several other Muslim leaders are now campaigning for the formation of this Front—VK. The Islamic Socialist Front will request the Delimitation Commission to reserve 16 electorates solely for Muslim MPs—VK. In reply to the Times Group of newspapers the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation have told that the reason for the Corporation to transport 60 barrels of crude oil to the Pesalai oil exploration site was to use them for the various machineries at the work site and this has not been transported on the sly—ATH. Dr. N. M. Perera, MP for Yatiyantota and leader of the LSSP, speaking at a well attended rally in Kandy yesterday said though the Prime Minister was making attempts to bring the Kandyan peasantry under the Kandyan capitalists (Radalayas) the LSSP which struggled against such a move in 1935-36 will never give way to the Prime Minister's attempts—JD. The LSSP leaders worshipped at a special Pooja at Dalada Maligawa before participating in the rally—JD. The Prime Minister presented a baby elephant called "Mangala" to the Kataragama temple—LD. Egypt has withdrawn its Air Force stationed in Syria in a dramatic new development in the worsening relations between the two countries. Before leaving the USSR with the French President, French Finance Minister, Jean-Pierre Foursade, said that Franco-Soviet trade would increase by 40 per cent this year.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21: In this year's admission to the University half the 30 per cent admission on the district quota basis will be reserved for districts deemed educationally deficient such as Amparai, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Hambantota, Mannar, Mone-ragala, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa, Trincomalee and Vavuniya: this recommendation of the Keuneman Committee has been approved by the Government—CDN. The Prime Minister, Mrs. Sirima Bandaranaike, addressing the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)—Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) seminar at the BMICH yesterday said that the concept of integrated rural development has to be considered more from the point of view of regional or area-wise development than from that of an overall national strategy of development—CDN. The Minister of Justice, Mr. Felix Dias Bandaranaike, yesterday

reinstated the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Kenneth Seneviratne—CDN. Telephonists at the Central Telephone Exchange who were on strike for the last three days protesting the installation of a device called "hooter" which made a big noise when the telephonists fail to answer a call within ninety seconds reported back to work yesterday: the Post Master General assured the telephonists that a medical officer will study the device to see whether it was harmful to the health of the employees and also assured them that he will soon take action to have a full strength of telephonists at the exchange—CDM. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, in an interview to the *Lankadipa* said that he will support only the UNP. All teachers unions have planned to come out on a day's token strike on December 1 demanding a salary of Rs. 355 for all trained teachers—ATH. The *Janadina* published a news story which said the implementation of the Keuneman Committee recommendations in the admissions to the University was a defeat to the communalistic organisation called the "Sinhala Tharuna Sangvidhanaya" whose President is the brother of the Prime Minister, Dr. Seewali Ratwatte. All employees of the Tyre Corporation struck work yesterday protesting against the interdiction of a trade union leader JD. Nearly 60 percent of the employees in the service of the Government and State Corporations have so far declared their assets and the balance are expected to declare their assets before the 31st of this month which is the final day for doing so—DM. A report on Chile by a United Nations Group has charged that Santiago torture centres, are being operated in Chilean capital, and at other places. Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, called upon particularly newly free and non aligned nations of Asia to strongly repudiate attempts at dictation by global strategies and compulsions of others. East German signed an agreement in East Berlin yesterday granting long-term loan to North Vietnam.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22: Mr. Nihal Jayawickrema, Secretary to the Ministry of Justice, requested the Controller of Immigration and Emigration to send him all applications for exit permit of State Employees, Corporations and Local authorities' following information that certain people who should declare their assets under the new Declarations of Assets Law were trying to leave the country: Mr. Jayawickrema wanted all such applications for his personal scrutiny till the end of this month which is the final date for declaring assets—CDN. According to the *Daily Mirror* the timely intervention of the Secretary to the Ministry of Justice prevented a Chairman of a State Corporation from leaving the country without declaring his assets. The Chief Justice, Mr. Victor Tennekoon, yesterday rejected the election petition filed against Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, President of the UNP and MP for Colombo South filed Mr. by D.A. Robert—CDM. Sixty Chinese technicians will shortly arrive in the country to "re-touch" the BMICH in-preparations for the forthcoming Non-aligned nation conference to be held in August next year: the Chinese will arrive here on their Governments' expense—CDM. In a memorandum by the Chief Operational Manager of the CTB to the Board of Directors it was stated that the Board loses Rs. 100,000 daily due to ticketless travel, over-riding and pilferage by conductors—CDM. The Army and the Police clashed in Point Pedro on Monday and as a protest to this incident the people of this electorate observed a two-day hartal: all shops

were closed and at certain places in the electorate the Police too have assaulted innocent people: the MP for Point Pedro, Mr. K. Thurairatnam, has taken up this matter with the authorities and demanded an inquiry—VK. The Karawanella Police arrested 24 youths in Ruwanwella belonging to a Left political party: according to the Police the youths were undergoing military type training at a school play grounds at the time of the arrest—LD. Plans are being drawn up by the State Film Corporation to completely take-over the import, export and distribution of all films—DM. According to the *Janadina* with the removal of rice barriers traders have started to buy up large quantities of paddy from the farmers and this is likely to push up the price of rice in the open market.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23: According to a new re-organisation plan drawn up by Mr. S. K. K. Suriyarachchi, Minister of Food, Small Industries and Cooperatives, the handloom industry in the country is to be completely re-organised and the scheme is expected to provide work for 150,000 youths: the scheme will also result in better quality handlooms at cheaper prices to the consumer—CDN. The Communist Party controlled Ceylon Federation of Trade Unions appealed to the Prime Minister to stop the passage of the Corporations Security Board Bill tabled in the NSA recently: according to the CFTU if the Bill became law this will provide another Police force in the country and can endanger the trade union movement—CDN. Mr. Rukman Senanayake, MP for Dedigama, in a letter to the UNP leader, Mr. J. R. Jayewardene, has said that since a committee has been appointed to find out whether his actions were justifiable or not, to request all members of the party and Mr. Jayewardene himself refrain from making any damaging statements against him—CDM. Mr. A. Amirthalingam, former MP for Vadducottai and the General Secretary of the TUF, and his wife were taken into custody yesterday from their residence in Jaffna by a special team of Police investigators from Colombo: they were later taken to "Kings House" and were interrogated from morning till evening: this arrest is a sequel to several inquiries conducted by a special Police team into the Jaffna Mayor's assassination: meanwhile the TUF had been contemplating for a Hartal protesting against the arrest of several Tamils in the Northern Province on and off by the Police—VK. The Student Council of the Peradeniya Campus of the University requested the Government to take immediate steps to help the 14,000 odd students who after qualifying in the GCE A Level Examination will not find accommodation in the University: only 4,000 of the 18,000 odd who qualified will gain admission to the university—ATH. In a recent survey conducted by the Department of Immigration and Emigration it has been found nearly 5,000 odd Indian estate workers pending deportation to India have vanished from their normal whereabouts—JD. The Government has been informed of traders who indulge in hoarding of rice and illicit export of same to India—LD. The Education Department has drawn up a plan to provide every electorate in the island with a model school for the benefit of rural students—DM. Three unidentified gunmen shot dead Turkey's 60-year old Ambassador to Austria Mr. Anis Tunaligil, in his office in Vienna: the three men were still not arrested according to the Police.

PALMYRAH REPORT—2

MANY USES

—Pinattu, Nongu, Pooran, Kottaikilangu, Pulukkodial, Odial, Leaf, Fibre, Medicinal and Timber—

THE FRUIT is not used very widely in India and Malaysia. In Ceylon, the juice of the soft fibrous tissue of the fruit is sometimes extracted after burning the fruit on cinder, and is consumed. It is common to sun-dry the extracted pulp juice in layers on mats made of palmyrah leaves and to consume it as a sweet. This known as "Pinattu". Sometimes pinattu is flavoured with spices and aromatic substances. The C.I.S.I.R. carried out fairly successful experiments in preparing molasses (for cattle feed) and jam from the pulp-juice, (K. Ratnasingham: Palmyrah Pulp—Chapter 8 and K. Ratnasingham: Palmyrah Jam. Chapter 9 of C.I.S.I.R. Bulletin No. 2 of 1967 op. cit) but these results have not been commercially explored so far.

The seeds of the palmyrah fruit, when young, contain a lining of gelatinous endosperm or kernel and some sweet-tasting water inside a hard shell. The kernel and the cool water is frequently consumed. It is said to be "cooling" (a common term used to denote a propensity to keep a body cool in a hot dry climate—a probable reference to thirst-quenching) and highly nutritious. (Vide V. Subrahmanyam, G. S. Bains, C. P. Natarajan and D. S. Bhatia: *The Carbohydrates of the tender Kernel of the Palmyrah Palm*—Arch. Biochem. Biophys.—60, 1956, pp. 27-43; S. N. Sarkar and B. S. Bhatia: Biological value of proteins of palmyrah products, Ann. Biochem. Exptl. Med. 5p. 59-62, 1945). In India, an attempt has been made to can the endosperm which is called "Nongu" (*Canning of tender palmyrah palm kernel, Food Science* 12, p. 77, 1963) but it does not appear to have been a commercial success.

It is also not uncommon to eat the young germinating embryo—called "Pooran"—before the seed shell has burst. In Thailand, this is canned in syrup and sold on a commercial scale. It is commonly used after meals as a dessert.

More common, however, is to eat the germinating shoot of the seed, when it is about 4 to 5 months old and about a foot long. "Kottaikilangu", as it is called in Ceylon, is a very popular article of food in Jaffna, and to some extent, in Celebes islands. Usually, the fallen seed is collected and planted in special seed beds. After 4 to 5 months, the germinating shoot (commonly but erroneously referred to as a root or a yam) is extracted. Generally, the larger shoots are called "Pulukkodial" in Jaffna. The smaller shoots are sun-dried in the natural state and are called "Odiyal". The par-boiled shoot is eaten direct while the other, which is slightly bitter, is converted to a flour and consumed in a variety of food preparations such as "Pittu". The odiyal is also used in Jaffna in a typical regional delicacy called "Odiyal Khool", which is a soup-like preparation also containing some fish, prawns etc. and/or vegetables. The bitter taste of odiyal is greatly reduced in these flour-based preparations. The flour is usually prepared in homes by pounding the dried shoots in the traditional pestle-and-mortar and its keeping qualities are low. Jeyaraj and Ratnasingham investigated the possibility of making storable and a better quality flour. (E. E. Jeyaraj and K. Ratnasingham: *Palmyrah 'Root' Flour*—Ch. 11 of Bulletin No. 2/1967, CISIR, Colombo—pp 42-46). They showed that grinding, washing and centrifuging of the shoots would yield a satisfactory flour with a low moisture content, and hence, with a better keeping quality.

According to Burkhill, the pith of the trunk is a storehouse of starch, which the plant exhausts during the flowering season. He mentions that sago could be made from it, but the economic viability of such manufacture, particularly in relation to alternate possibilities of sap-use and sago-manufacture, is open to question.

LEAF AND FIBRE PRODUCTS: Although the leaf and the fibre of the palmyrah are widely used for a large variety of purposes, a considerable proportion is not commercially exploited at all. Of the leaf, the tender leaf is commercially processed more than the mature leaf. As for fibre, the palmyrah yields at least five distinct kinds, namely, from the base of the

leaf stalk from the leaf stalk itself, from the pericarp of the seed, from the leaf blades and from the interior of the stem. The last two are not commercially exploited.

As mentioned earlier, the tender leaf, when dried, was once used as a writing material, a use which is now virtually dead. It is also known that palmyrah leaf is not ill-suited for paper manufacture. Some research done in 1920 has shown that "paper made from blades was yellowish, with very satisfactory resistance to rubbing, an average resistance to tearing, but weak in tenacity as regards direct pulling. The pulp, however, proved difficult to bleach. The leaf stalks required rather severe treatment to break them down—they gave a soft greyish paper with fairly satisfactory durability. Of course, no paper has yet been commercially produced from palmyrah.

The tender leaf is more durable than the mature leaf and hence is widely used in the manufacture of an assorted range of products such as mats, baskets, hats, fans, toys, and traditional domestic utensils such as strainers and winnows. Generally, the leaf is reinforced with "naar"—the outer rind of the petiole (stalk) of the leaf—and ekel. Such use is almost universal, wherever palmyrah grows ranging from India and Ceylon to Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, to Malaysia and Indonesia. The main problem of this industry, however is the low durability of the product which arises from the brittleness of the leaf. Also, products of very high quality cannot be marketed because of the leaf's susceptibility to fungus attack in humid climates, which in turn leads to discolouration of the product.

In India the problem of discolouration is tackled by a process of sulphuring, but it is difficult to expand the market for a product which requires sulphuring off and on to retain its pristine lustre. Some noteworthy research in Ceylon by the C.I.S.I.R., however, suggests a solution to the problem. Jeyaraj and Sivaramalingam (I. E. E. Jeyaraj and R. Sivaramalingam: *Young Leaf*—Chapter 1 or C.I.S.I.R. Bulletin No. 2 of 1967 op. cit) have shown that the treatment of the leaf by 1% Sodium Pentachlorophenate for over 20

Palmyrah Fibre

minutes and thereafter by 5% Zinc Sulphate for 5 minutes, not only arrested the brittleness of the leaf, but also prevented subsequent mould growth and discolouration. The question of cost, however, will have to be gone into. Another problem which affects the marketability of mats and baskets is the roughness of the edges of the woven strips of palmyrah leaf. This is an inherent character of the sturdy young leaf and the woven mat compares adversely with mats made from other leaves with softer edges.

Relatively low-value products are however, commonly manufactured from the leaf, its ribs and the stalk. Leaf baskets and cheap mats are quite common. The link-ribs of the leaf—called "Adaviyan"—is used in the manufacture of onion bags, which was once a thriving cottage industry in Jaffna. The sturdy *naar* baskets once popular in construction actively (for carrying rock and soil) has been gradually replaced by the steel pans. The *naar* was also used in Jaffna inter-mixed with the *ekel*, in making of rope for drawing water from wells. The advent of the water pump has heralded the decline of this use. Such rope was even used for tying cattle, but the coir rope is gradually replacing that too. India, however, has developed a highly successful industry around *naar* and *ekel* products, which will be discussed at greater length later on in the report.

It is important that the harvesting of the tender leaf should be done with care. Usually, the leaves are cut biennially, and that too, about 2 or 3 leaves at each cutting. Indiscriminate defoliation seriously affects the growth of the palm, as is evident in the Hambantota region.

It is confidently claimed that safety match boxes could be made out of the dried leaf and match sticks out the *ekel*. We have seen very good samples of such products, although there is no known commercial production, anywhere.

The mature leaf is a common source of cattle fodder and manure in most palmyrah growing regions. Joachim and Kandiah (A. W. R. Joachim & S. Kandiah: *The Analysis of Ceylon Foodstuffs—Tropical Agri-culturist*, May 1938) gave the chemi-

cal content of the mature leaf as 12% Protein, 33% Carbohydrates, 4% fat, 7% ash and 35% fibre, which compares well with other grasses used as cattle food. The high content of tough fibre, however, is a problem. In Jaffna, it is common for farmers to remove the ribs and cut the leaves into narrow strips before feeding it to the cattle. Apparently no attempts have been made to process the leaf in an easier way. On the other hand, the use of the mature leaf, when it is greenish, as compost is a common feature in India and Ceylon. In India, leaves are buried in the paddy fields. In Jaffna and Mannar regions too, this is a common practice, but it is said to be declining on account of high cost of labour and relative abundance of cheaper chemical fertilizers.

Of course, the dried leaf could be put to many other uses, such as fencing in Jaffna. The leaf with the stalk is interspersed to form the traditional "palmyrah curtain" of the Northern family. These fences could last upto two years, and thereafter, the decaying leaf is used as fuel and the fence replaced.

Quite unlike other products from the palmyrah, the fibre is an item that has entered international trade. Of the five varieties of fibre that could be extracted from the palmyrah some economic use is made only of the fibre from the base of the leaf stalk. This is sold in world markets as *Bassine*, as a substitute for Bass (the inner bark of the lime tree, which is used in making mats, baskets, brooms and cordage. It is interesting that Ceylon was the first country to export this fibre in the 1890s. (Kew Bulletin, 1892, p. 148 quoted in Burkill op. cit). This trade is no more, having died at about the time of the first World War. India today is the only known and a major supplier of this fibre to world markets. The base of the palmyrah stalk-called "*Kangumaddai*" in Jaffna—is generally left on the palm when leaves are cut. After some time, it dries and falls to the ground. Where fibre is extracted, it is removed from the tree and after retting or beating with a hammer, a strong thick bristle-like fibre is extracted by forcing it manually over a few nail spikes. This is an ideal fibre for hard brushes and

is reported to be widely used in Western countries for heavy duty brushes used in street cleaning etc. Of late, there has been some reports of competition from synthetic substitutes, but as in the case of coir fibre, there are certain unique properties in palmyrah fibre which should enable it to withstand competition from synthetics which are known to be deficient in such qualities. The steady market for palmyrah fibre is attributed to the fact that it is resistant to both alkalis and acids as well as attacks by termites. Incidentally, small quantities of this fibre is imported to Ceylon.

The fibre from the leaf-stalk, however, presents a lot of problems. The stalk contains a fibre which could be extracted after retting. Sivaramalingam (R. Sivaramalingam: *Fibre from Palmyrah stalk*—Chapter 2 of Bulletin No. 2/1967, CISIR, Colombo, pp. 5-6) conducted several experiments with green stalks for such fibre extraction, but found that the fibre was brittle, dirty yellowish in colour and having a tendency to split. He found the quality of the fibre disappointing mainly because of its low tensile strength. Incidentally, Bhargava, Kasbekar and Patel (M. P. Bhargava, G. S. Kasbekar and P. J. Patel: *Utilization of palmyrah stalks for manufacture of bleached writing papers*, Indian Forest Leaflet No. 116, 1949) experimented with the manufacture of paper from air-dried stalks, and the result was a moderate quality writing paper. The commercial feasibility of this proposition has yet to be seen.

The palmyrah seed is covered with a thick layer of flaxen coloured soft fibre, which is not known to be commercially exploited anywhere. It is said to be suitable for soft carpets and rugs. Sivaramalingam (R. Sivaramalingam: *Fibre from Palmyrah seeds*, Chapter 10 of Bulletin No. 2/1967, CISIR, Colombo) found that mechanical extraction gave a low-yield and the fibre was of poor quality. Where the seed from which the pulp had been extracted by traditional methods was used, it was observed that about one pound of fibre of improved quality could be extracted from about 16 fruits. He estimated the seed-fibre potential at about 10,000 tons per year. The prospect for this fibre would, however, depend on marketability and cost of production.

MEDICINAL PRODUCTS: By very long tradition, palmyrah products are reported to contain medicinal properties. Undoubtedly, the yeast (C. Charavanaparan: Food Yeast—A source of Proteins and Vitamins. Tropical Agriculturist, III, 1955, pp. 115-119; A. W. Liyanage and S. Sente Shanmuganathan: Comparative studies of yeasts isolated from Fermented saps in Ceylon, Proceedings of Ceylon Association for Advancement of Science, 1970, pp. 97-8) in the sap is a high source of vitamin B, and this is the main factor responsible for the claimed curative effects of sap-products. This vitamin in sufficient doses is often recommended for beri beri, impaired metabolism of carbohydrates, reddening and erosion of the skin, convulsions in infants, pernicious anaemia caused by inability to absorb nutrition and many more afflictions. Also, from time immemorial, various products from the palm have been used as diuretic, a vermifuge and as laxative.

Nadkarni in the Indian Materia Medica (K M Nadkarni in: *Indian Materia Medica*, Bombay, 1954 pp. 209-10) says that the root is a restorative; the juice, a diuretic and a stimulant; the pulp from unripe fruit, a diuretic, a demulcent and a nutritive; the terminal buds, a diuretic and a nutritive; the juice from such buds, a laxative, an anti-inflammatory and a specific for dropsy and diabetes; ash of the flowering stalk, a specific for enlarged spleen; charcoal from the bark, a dentrifice; and a decoction of the bark and salt, an astringent gargle. Burkhill refers to the use of the petiole in Cambodia as a vermifuge. Chopra and others (R. N. Chopra and others: *Indigenous Drugs of India*, Calcutta, 1958, p. 666.) in India refer to the use of toddy poultice (with rice flour) as an anti-inflammatory, and the juice of young terminal parts and the decoction of the root in the treatment of gastritis and hiccough. The "Kallakaram" is said to be useful in treating many pulmonary disorders. Generally, the claims made of the medicinal properties of palmyrah products are innumerable and these do require thorough investigation.

TIMBER PRODUCTS: The palmyrah also yields a strong timber which is capable of bearing considerable amount of cross-strain. Hence, it is used widely as rafters

and reapers in house construction, its other uses are as walking sticks wall plaques and curio items. The main drawback is that the thick woody portion of the trunk, as in the case of all palms, is thin or narrow and this factor has hindered its wider use in the manufacture of furniture etc.

The above certainly does not exhaust all possible uses of the palmyrah. It may be useful, however, to mention the uses of the shell. It is estimated that only about a third of the available seeds are used in the production of edible shoots in the Jaffna region. The rest is mainly used as a domestic fuel. Also, the shell is converted to charcoal, which is commonly used by goldsmiths. Sivaramalingam (R. Sivaramalingam: *Palmyrah Seeds*—Chapter 12 of Bulletin No. 2/1967, CISIR, Colombo pp. 47-50) experimented with destructive distillation of the seed-shell, and found that it contained 35% Pyrolygineous Acid, 6% Settled Tar and 24% Charcoal. The liquor had a high acetic acid content, and he estimated the potential in the Jaffna region alone as 300 tons of acetic acid per annum. He felt, however, that cost of production and transport would render the manufacture uneconomical.

(To be Continued)



**BUILDING A
VILLAGE HOUSE-55**

**Anywhere, Anywhere
Out Of The World!**

By Herbert Keuneman

THE LATEST TIME was last Monday but it had happened three times before in the three-and-a-half years during which I have been travelling by train between Galgamuwa and Colombo, and that is to count only those cases involving the particular trains I have been in.

I had finished the 'box lunch' of meat pies and cheesecakes from a Colombo cafe' which is the regular indulgence I allow myself in order to beguile the tedium of the journey back to the village from Colombo's fleshpots, and I was idly holding out of the window the polythene bag in which my lunch had been packed. I let

in fill and flutter in the rush of wind and I was looking for a little child towards whom to release it, for I remembered how when my wife and I first went to Ehetuwewa all those years ago the children used to squabble even over paper bags, which they called kotta-ura: 'pillow-cases'; chiefly no doubt for the sheer childish pleasure of ownership, since in those so-called less prosperous times you could buy two ploythene bags for the price you must pay for a plain paper bag in these times of our affluence!

It was then I saw the small girl—she may have been 6 or 8—running full pelt in the opposite direction to the train below the embankment the train was traversing, and decided to release the bag to her.

As we drew abreast and flashed past I smiled and waved the bag at her—there was one cheesecake for her left in it—yet in that instant I became aware, as sharply as of a blow in the wind, of the look of naked terror on her face: and it was just then I felt the brake; go hard on. But my brain had already signalled my fingers to let go, to release my ill-timed irrelevant malaprop offering, and they did.

For the next moment the little girl reacted automatically, too. She stopped, and looked back, and for that moment the set face relaxed and she half-answered my smile; but then the terror returned, and as the still fast-moving train whirled us apart she began again to run from it whatever it was. But you could see it was the kind of terror that ran with her and would haunt her long wherever she hid.

The train came to a halt a couple of hundred yards further on. No one, at first, took much notice: we were approaching a station, and most took it for granted there was a semaphore against us. But gradually, beginning from the carriages nearest the engine, people began to climb down and stream back along the track, the usual ghoulish sensation-seekers eager to gaze upon whatever to gaze upon remained, for it had already begun to be bruited: suicide:....

'Suicide!'

'Sure, suicide.'

Disappointedly: 'Chah! I didn't see.'

On Suicide

'I saw. I was looking towards the engine.'

'..tried to drag a little girl with her, but the child broke away.'

'..tried to fling herself down. But the child must have delayed her, I think the buffer got her..'

And five minute later the crowd streaming back, still insatiate, still having supp'd not quite full enough with horrors:

'Hah! not a struggle left in her.'

'Quite a young woman.'

'Young woman? How can one tell..now?'

'What happened to the child?'

But what had happened to the woman, young or old, that had brought her to this desperate pass? The ubiquitous Know-it-all that unflinchingly appears on such occasions already had it all pat. '..couldn't take it, it seems', he was saying as he passed my window. 'Her husband left her when the daughter was born. She found a job, but lately she lost it. She's not from this village; there was no one.....'

I was doubtful that he could have learned as much in so brief a space, although a considerable crowd from the bazaar nearby had by now augmented the sight-seers from the train, and he might have heard something. But, on the whole, I was inclined—I suppose I was unconsciously seeking my own comparative peace of mind: it is more comfortable to accept a familiar background to a tragedy—to lean towards the commonplace explanation that the gossiping crowd now climbing again into their compartments offered: 'Must have been a love affair.'

Looking back toward my earlier stay in Ehetuwewa and the four suicides my wife and I had known in our four years in the village—Joslin Nona, the wife 'from abroad' who lived next door to us and had set fire to herself and stood by her husband's bed like an accusation but had died mumbling his absolution from any blame; Beba, who had taken *mahi-tel* because her family forbade the indisputable undesirable who had nevertheless captured her fancy; Rammali, the *rodi* girl, and Kapu, heirress of a better-than-well-to-do *mudalali*, each of whom had chosen the trains for their juggernauts—I remembered, almost with relief, that all had been sacrifices to love affairs;

so that it was tempting to agree. As I say, even a pattern of tragedy becomes somehow less tragic when the pattern is, so to speak, trite.

The Sinhalese *ethos* is such that there is no more unanswerable so less exceptionable parthian revenge for a frustrated *amour* (or a wounded *amour propre*) than to die. Emotionally it may shock, it is intended to shock; but it is as socially un-shocking as *seppuku* to a *samurai*. Knox relates how 'they will make away with themselves; so that they might bring their Adversary to great damage'. The act is less magnificent than a ceremonial disembowelling of oneself, because it is not a matter of restoration of honour so much as one of having the last reproachful word; but it is effective, and respected, as the last word indeed. And so we have the classic Sinhalese suicide: if you lose a particularly ardent contest, if you fail an exam, if your husband reproaches you for an ill-seasoned curry....

Against such a background it is possible to regard a suicide for love with—nearly—equanimity. At least you can soothe yourself with the reflexion that the mind of a suicide at such a moment must be in some way 'other': like the mind of a martyr in the arena: transported, anaesthetized by the intoxicant of extreme emotion. If I could wholly believe that such was the pattern of the suicide I am writing about, I would not be writing about it; not anyway, at this length.

But Know-it-all's confident avowal—'she couldn't take it'—has enlivened the worm of Fear in its burrow in my own heart (there are times when I feel I cannot much longer 'take it' either: the sheer impossibility of survival on today's terms or, worse, of finding sufficient reason to survive). And it is a fact that a new pattern of suicide seems—lately—to have arisen: the pattern of suicide from plain black largely-economic despair.

After a ten-year gap I have again spent nearly four years, now, in Ehetuwewa; and in this time I have not known a single case of old-pattern suicide. This is, of course, all to the good and must stem, whether from education or cynicism, from an altered and 'rationalized' sense of values. Pragmatist orientated. BUT.....

..within this triumph achievement

of sophistication the new suicide-pattern (the choice of death as the most pragmatic choice of all) emerges. To be sure, we have had no such suicides, either, in Ehetuwewa itself; and to be sure, the Desperation Syndrome so to call it was not entirely unknown even in the Bad Old Days. But that in our promised Golden Age the new pattern, represented amongst many examples by the Rajangane colonist who poisoned himself and his whole family or the girls who drowned themselves together in the Kandy lake because economically there seemed nothing else to do, should begin to replace the comparatively innocent old pattern is a fearful thing. It is a fearful thing—and by fearful I mean Full Of Fearsome Responsibility—when in a country the statistics of suicide begins to be the proper study not only of psychologists and sociologists but, even more, of administrators and politicians!

A. S. BASNAYAKE, ESQ. Last Monday was a day of more than one tragedy if one may also count as tragedy a perfectly natural and dignified death that nevertheless leaves one personally deeply sorrowing. For, just about the time when full of the uncomfortable thoughts I have described above I was descending from the train at Galgamuwa there lay dying at Kurunegala (though unknown to me) my unflinching friend of sixteen years, the Sub-Postmaster of Ehetuwewa. By my lights I think I should do him less than justice if I were to indulge the convention naturally followed by every speaker—and there were eight or nine—of an oration at his funeral pyre: *nil nisi bonum*. I believe, indeed that if he knew Latin he would have enjoyed the quip I offer by way of alternative: *nil nisi bonus!*: although he did me many and many a kindness with no bonus at all. For, wholly typical villager though he was (but Villager writ very large) he was a-typical in that he could appreciate a joke against himself; which on its own is no small mark of greatness. We disagreed often, and often fundamentally, on many matters—it seems, on most matters—but I feel we respected each other's contrary point of view. Certainly I respected his, even while some of them actually repelled me; because, as I say, to me he represented all the village values I have tried to

understand—I have long since given up trying to share them—but in a figure twice the stature of any other villager I have intimately known.

It was he who told me with a sly, but kindly-sly, smile (because I myself had accomplished but one of the tasks, and perhaps he was doubtful of the complete outcome even of that) that no man in the village was accounted a whole man until he had reaped his own field; built his own house; and successfully reared a family. And there his own whole ambition and philosophy seemed to be summed up.

He often enjoyed relating to me—and somehow I did not tire of hearing—how he first arrived in Ehetuwewa with a 5-rupee note in his pocket, a 'foreigner', though with the advantage/disadvantage of belonging to the *radala* (or landed gentry) class, cycling from his home in Kambuwatawana 7 miles away where the sole distinction he had hitherto gained on his own had been to come to the rescue of a force-landed R. N. flyer who had at first drawn his pistol in self-defence against the natives in case they were unfriendly! to seek pasture in fresh fields by starting out in business of some sort. Of any sort.

By the time my wife and I came to live here he had so far succeeded in his determinations that he was already Sub-Postmaster (though, true to village conservatism, his own Post Peon—of Ehetuwewa born—was still reckoned the more important man) and owned and had many times reaped a large field which, if it was outside the ancestral Ehetuwewa *yayas*, had nevertheless the blessing of being served by its own small tank; and he had built his house; and he owned a *kade* which was then a very going concern; and he was well married and had even then a family of four and one coming. To these and to establishing the family status in the village of his adoption he single-mindedly devoted his life.

When he died—I think he could look back upon those ambitions all more than fulfilled: he was probably the village's biggest land owner: he was beyond doubt—officially, anyway—its most influential inhabitant, Chairman of the village Sama Mandalaya, and J.P., envied by many but bowed to

by them as by many more; and his elder children were already successfully placed. Such things are not achieved by idealists and visionaries; and he was neither. He was a politician who understood—and used—politics; a village financier who understood—and used—finance. But between times (and where there was no conflict of interest) he found room for much kindness; nor could the *quid* he had, after all, every right to expect be at all times anything like calculatedly *pro quo*.

I myself was many times such a disproportionate beneficiary. And the remembrances came to me with especial poignancy as I stood before his pyre and waited for the flame. Conscious and responsible almost to the very last, he had made the most meticulous dispositions for his own forthcoming funeral. Just behind the place he had chosen for his cremation stood the house in which while my Village House was in building I had lived for almost a year rent free. Having regard to my virtual uselessness to him, only a village-dweller could assay such a gesture of disinterested friendship.

The smoke rose, and little flames had begun to lick at the casket when I turned away. I supposed the life my friend had just closed was far from the beatitude I wished him: he had chosen to be faithful to a lower attainment. But if faithfulness is itself a high merit, then indeed he had earned an auspicious rebirth. Wherefore, be it by lowly steps,

May He Attain Nibbana

* * *

K A Z I — 27

In The Pannala Area

By Anatory Bukoba

June 21,

Sandalankawa is at the southwest end of the Kurunegala District, and Pannala is not far from it, the Maha Oya runs the whole length of the south side of the district. There are bridges across the river at Giriulla, Alawwa and Polgahawela, and a new Bridge at Badalgama, but for the most

part, I imagine, the river is crossed on *oruwas*, boats which are punted across by one man, or, in times of floods, paddled by four. They are like two long dug-out canoes with planks across them. These *oruwas* do not ply at night, and the crossing is twenty-five cents, or more with the water at flood levels. Bicycles are taken across, and everybody stands for the crossing. When I reached the other side, a boy told me it was his grandfather who plied the *oruwa*. I had a three-mile walk to the nearest tarred road, but there is a bus, once in the morning, and once in the evening. It was coconut all the way, and some paddy fields. Houses there were a-many. I came across a friend's estate now vested with government. A passer-by said that the grass was all over the estate: in my friend's day, was like a lawn. It did not look too bad now, but the stranger wanted to emphasize the difference.

There was, so I was told, the usual musical and dance session at the house I was at. Two little upright or up-turned drums joined together, and played with the bare hands, provided the rhythm, supported by two home-made instruments, one with shop-made written all over it, such a final polish had it, the other, although finely done, obviously make-shift. The fourth man danced, all four in a tiny room, crowded with the few articles of furniture it had; the door into the verandah opened, the elders looking in if they happened to be there. At least one of them sang. The fifth man of the troupe was missing, but I met him the next day. He had not got home till midnight. They were all in almost adjoining houses, two, brothers, in the house where the sessions were held. One was an artist, who turned out drawings on demand, in a few minutes. They were all young, at work, at school, or passing away the time at home farming. The brothers were strappers, well filled out, though not tall, their father a farmer, as was their mother who helped him.

At a boutique, hoppers, fine ones, were ten cents, and plantains fifteen. A Sinhalese rarely asks the price of anything before he eats it, and I am beginning to have an idea that it pays to eat to eat first and ask later. One lad joined me; he reminded me that we had met the previous day,

and he was going to school at Sandalankawa. He and many others were on their way to the weekly *pola* or fair on the other side of the river. The river was full, the boat crowded, the banks wide apart, and still our boatman punted us across, unhurried, fine ferryman, sure, strong the crossing swift. There was no need to remove our shoes at either end. My young friend said he could not swim in answer to my query. Then I jokingly told him he ought to go round by Giriulla and not risk the ferry. It was rather a flat joke, as our *oruwa* was so manifestly steady and safe.

I got back soon after nine, and at seven that morning, a buffalo had given birth to a calf, a bull as we found out later. She was tame enough, allowing us to go quite near. The calf was unsteady on its feet then. Later it wandered quite far from its mother, through some barbed wire, and lay down in a deep contour drain, out of sight, quite out of view. Its mother's callings would not move it, but my descent into the drain did; it crashed though the wire unhurt and rejoined its dam.

* * *

LETTERS

* Church's Dilemma
* Police

Sir,
Sri Lanka was still a crown colony and English was the official language 50 years ago when Cecil Douglas Horsley was elected Bishop of Colombo. The only thing that was known of locally was that he was the son of an Admiral who had visited Sri Lanka ports. When he arrived in Sri Lanka the Anglican Church community beheld a handsome well-built youth looking younger than his 35 years with a vibrant, pleasing, husky voice which ordinarily should have made him acceptable. But the message he brought was unacceptable. From the day of his arrival his slogan was "Indigenise", and to suit action to his word, within 24 hours of his arrival, he learned to recite the benediction in Sinhala. This made him unacceptable to the suburban clergy and laity, the

Sinhala elite in particular. Shortly afterwards a disappointed Bishop Horsley left Sri Lanka to accept the then vacant see of Gibraltar. He died a year or two later.

Between then and now Sri Lanka has not only achieved independence but also the national languages and culture have come back into their own but the suburban clergy and laity have failed miserably to keep pace with the changing times. Logic, they say, is on their side. Here we have for a generation or two (or more) worshipped God in English. In joy, sorrow, at births, deaths and funerals, the recital or the singing of hymns, scripture passages and prayers in English, have been our greatest solace. It is inhuman and cruel to ask us to change this setup which is part and parcel of ourselves. Time alone can effect the necessary changes, they argued. Superficially this was perfectly true but nobody asked them to discard English. What was desired was that the national languages and culture be also given their place in Christian worship it was pointed out, so they compromised and agreed to a once a month separate Sinhala or Tamil service in addition to the usual English services.

This has been duly given effect to in suburban churches a Sinhalese service began to be held for the benefit of empty pews. Pews like other items of furniture, such as tables and chairs, have no religion. Furthermore they are inanimate things unable to understand even Sinhala. The attitude of suburban clergy and laity on deeper examination will be found to the selfish and intolerant. They are only a very small segment of the Church of which the youth and teenagers in the suburbs are the preponderant majority. These latter today are very proficient in Sinhala which is taught in Schools. But they are indignant that the national language and culture has not been given their due place in Christian worship—not through any fault of their own but due to the bad example set by their elders.

In such a poignant situation the elders (clergy and laity) should turn for guidance to the life and teachings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. More than any other religion Christianity emphasises the need for sacrifice. Jesus said,

"if thy hand or thy foot or eye offend thee cut or pluck it off and cast it from thee for it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet or two eyes to the cast unto hell fire".

One need not know Sinhala or Tamil to conduct a bilingual or trilingual service. There are today teenagers who can assist by reading some of the prayers or scripture portions and rendering a lyric in Sinhala and Tamil. There is no other mode of transition from a foreign to the national language and culture in the above mentioned circumstances.

R.W.W.

Colombo.
8.10.75

* *

Sir,
May I have the courtesy of your columns to bring to the notice of the Inspector General of Police that Police personnel travelling on duty are not adequately provided with travelling facilities to enable them to perform their duties efficiently. The other day I had occasion to lodge a complaint at the Vavuniya Police Station regarding the theft of a suit case of mine whilst I was travelling from Vavuniya to Mannar to attend a Court Case. Having got the information that the culprit, who had committed the offence in broad day light, was somewhere in the vicinity of Trincomalee, two officers and I left by bus on this hunt, I paid my bus fare to Pankulam but the Police Officers having a C.T.B. Bus Warrant exchanged it for a ticket to Trincomalee. Since we had to get off at Pankulam to look for the shady and elusive bus buster, they were unable to make use of the bus tickets to Trincomalee and as they had no alternative we had to buy fresh bus ticket for all three of us.

At the Uppuveli Police Station they produced the mother of the man who is alleged to have stolen my suitcase because it was found that she had tried to sell part of the clothes in my suitcase to another lawabiding government servant who promptly surrendered them when he became aware of the arrest of the woman concerned. When returning to Vavuniya with the accused—an escorting

matron two Police Officers and myself—at Pankulam an informant told one of the Officers in the bus that the suitcase thief was seen that morning at Pankulam loitering about with the stolen suitcase in hand. In the ordinary course the police officers should have got off the Vavuniya Bus to go in pursuit of the wanted man. But to my amazement I found they did not do any such thing as they were handicapped with the departmental redtape—the bus warrant had been changed, and should they go after the wanted man, they would have to pay their fares back to Vavuniya. So the wanted man got away and up to date he has not been apprehended.

Police Officers going out on similar duties as stated above should be given C.T.B. Passes which would enable them to Travel as and where necessary according to the exigencies of their duties necessitated. The present system of issuing C.T.B. or Railway Warrants to travel between specified points, as illustrated above, would be aiding and abetting the culprit on the run, and it should be dispensed with. Go-as-you-please duty passes should be issued to police officers assigned man-hunting or criminal tracking duties. Had this been adopted and in vogue I am certain the culprit would have been arrested at Pankulam on that very day his mother was and transported to the Vavuniya Police Station in a subsequent Bus.

This snag in the travelling facilities provided to the guardians of the law, is responsible for the fact that several wanted men are still at large and laughing with scorn at the Police who allow wanted men to slip through their very fingers because of a flaw in the present system of travelling permitted them under the existing set up.

Will the Inspector-General of Police please take early action to rectify the above shortcoming in his Department owing to which many a criminal and law breaker is today laughing at the law and the symbol of the law?

Magi A. Punniapuvirajasinghe
Sri Lanka Maritime Welfare Association
"Kuruchandre Inpam",
Mannar.

* * *

ANGLICAN VIEW—I

CHURCH UNION

—Empire And Religion—

by Jepharis

We publish posthumously, in two parts, the last article sent to us by *Jepharis*, who had died recently under tragic circumstances in a bus accident near Nuwara Eliya. In the last four years, *Jepharis* has been one of the most regular and steadfast writers whose contributions have appeared in the columns of the *Tribune*. He was a freelancer in every sense of the word and with his independent means he had ranged far and wide in search of subjects on which to write. *Jepharis* wrote on a wide variety of topics, all of them centred on the country he so dearly loved, Sri Lanka. Deeply religious, *Jepharis* devoted a great deal of his time to religious and social work. He was a keen and meticulous researcher in a wide variety of matters. In the death of *Jepharis*, *Tribune* has lost one of its most enthusiastic and ablest of its regular correspondents; and the country has lost one of the most promising of the younger writers in the English language. *Church Union* was one of the topics nearest to his heart and it is a fitting tribute to his memory that we should publish this article now because the united Church of Sri Lanka will be formally inaugurated shortly—Ed.

(Sir) Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965) once described his Prime Ministerial successor Clement Richard (Lord) Attlee (1883-1967) as "a modest man with much to be modest about" and "a sheep in sheep's clothing" whose "destiny it was to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire".

Hand in hand with the liquidation of the British Empire, or to modify, the maturing of the British Empire into the British Commonwealth of Nations; went the liquidation of the Church of England abroad, or again to modify, the indigenisation of the Church of

England throughout the scattered outposts of what was formerly a great empire—in fact the last major vestige of colonialism in History, ending the other great world empires, the Egyptian, the Assyrian, the Babylonian, the Medo-Persian, the Greek, the Roman, the Ottoman, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Belgian, the French, the Hapsburg and the German.

It was during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that "Brittania ruled the waves", "the British Empire was at the zenith of her power and her glory" and both Victoria the Great (1819-1901: reign 1837-1901) and her son Edward VII (1841-1910: reign 1901-1910) ruled a realm on which "the sun never set". Indeed, at the turn of the present century, when Imperialism was at its height, about one-fourth of the land surface of the earth was coloured red on the globe; and wherever the Union Jack was planted, one of the first things that those early pioneering colonists and missionaries did was to build a church, other things like the parliamentary system of administration modelled on "the mother of parliaments", the Roman-Dutch judicature guaranteeing justice for all irrespective of race, caste, class or creed, respect for local religions and cultural traditions, encouragement for the native inhabitants to improve themselves and develop their cottage industries, the growth of plantations, the opening-up of communications, and of course, for relaxation, the cricket, the turf, the golf-course and the whiskey-and-soda, usually following suit in quick succession.

The Anglican form of Protestantism, had its roots in the great reform movement of the 16th century, when "bluff king Hal" (Henry VIII: reign 1509-1547) broke away from the Church of Rome primarily for the incidental and rather frivolous reason that he wished to divorce and re-marry six times (which Roman Catholicism forbid, especially in a State Sovereign) and also on account of severe doctrinal and theological differences with his papal legate, Cardinal Wolsey: as characterised by Henry's writing of the "Assertion of the Seven Sacraments" in reply to Luther, for which he received the title of "Defender of the Faith" from Pope Leo X in 1521. Enraged by Wolsey and

the Pope, Henry in 1529 deprived the former of the "great seal" of the Church of England and gave it to Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) who later died a martyr of the Reformation.

Wolsey though sentenced and later pardoned by the king, died in disgrace in 1530. At the suggestion of Thomas Cranmer (1489-1556) Archbishop of Canterbury (and incidentally the first Archbishop of the Reformation and therefore first Church of England Archbishop), Henry broke away from the Church of Rome and severed his loyalty to Leo X. The Pope in turn ex-communicated Henry, who retaliated by passing the ACT OF SUPREMACY (1534) appointing himself and his successors "Protector and only Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England" (Thus it is that in 1975 Queen Elizabeth II is still "Defender of the Faith" among her various other titles).

This may be taken as the moment of birth of the Church of England, on which occasion Cranmer remarked to More: "I trust we have this day lit such a lamp in England as might never be extinguished" or words of similar historic import. The break with Rome had political and personal origins: at first there were no real differences in dogma and liturgy. Thomas Cromwell (1485-1540), a former servant of Wolsey and his successor in the favour of the king, now appearing on the scene as viceregent in matters relating to the newly constituted Church of England, in 1536 published Tindale's translation of the Bible (the first authorised Anglican version, ante-dating the universally accepted King James version, of 1611, by 75 years), and in 1539 proposed the STATUTE OF THE SIX ARTICLES under which denial of any of these positions constituted heresy: (1) transubstantiation, (2) communion in one kind for laymen, (3) celibacy of the priesthood, (4) inviolability of vows of chastity, (5) necessity of private masses, (6) necessity of auricular confession.

It will be seen therefore that originally the Church of England did not defer in any theological, doctrinal, dogmatic or liturgical aspect from the teachings of the Church of Rome. It merely disclaimed all loyalty to the Pope, without even contesting the "infallibility of the Roman Pontiff",

and transferred such allegiance to the English Sovereign not only as Head of State and later Commonwealth, but as "Head of the Church" and subsequently "Defender of the Faith". In 1551, however, Cranmer published the Forty-two articles of religion which were essentially the basis of Anglican Protestantism, though their form was not final until the Thirty-nine articles of Elizabeth's reign (1563) were later incorporated into the Book of Common Prayer (1662) as cardinal dogma of the Anglican Faith.

As the British Empire grew during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries, the Anglican brand of Christianity spread gradually in its wake far beyond the shores of the mother country, to every land on which the Union Jack was planted, and even to some lands where it was not. The American Episcopalian Church in the U.S.A., for instance, which sprung from the seeds of Christianity carried to that vast continent by the Pilgrim Fathers abroad the "Mayflower" in 1620, fleeing the religious persecution and denial of the freedom of worship instigated by the spread of Roman Catholicism throughout Europe in the 17th century; later watered by the Holy Spirit and coaxed to maturity by the British Colonists of the 18th century, has now grown into a mustard tree covering the entire North American continent, and is in full communion with Canterbury. There are several other, too numerous to mention, as one might call them "semi-Anglican" Protestant Churches in many parts of the world OUTSIDE the British Commonwealth who are in "inter-communion" with Canterbury, without being strict members of the Anglican Communion itself.

Just as the Church of England originally broke away, in a great, reform movement, from the Church of Rome, which claims an unbroken apostolic succession (for the interest of those traditionalists who believe that an "historic episcopacy" is a hall-mark of the "true church", and "where the bishop is, there is the church!) from the Apostle Peter, the first Pope and Vicar of Christ on earth, who received his Divine Commission from no less a person than Jesus Himself: *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock (petrus) I shall build my*

church: so did the Methodist and Baptist churches later break away from the Church of England due to minor thrusts of reformation within that church led by the Wesley brothers and others.

Throughout the British Commonwealth and former Empire, the Church of England indigenous to these new nations and few remaining colonies and crown colonies "started negotiating with her two daughters Wesley and Baptist" as this writer once described them "with a view to submerging their three identities in a common pool of Church Union" thereby making a substantial contribution towards world-wide ecumenical trends, which were endeavouring more and more to bring an end to the disgraceful schisms and heresies scarring and wounding and dividing Christ's precious body, namely the Church visible and militant here on earth, a segment or extension in space and time of the Church Universal, and at rest in Paradise.

The World Council of Churches and others similarly motivated (by the Holy Spirit, we hope and pray) organisations on an international scale, and National Christian Councils and several negotiating committees at national levels, were all trying to make a significant breakthrough towards the ultimate union of all Christendom, trying hard to be in fact *a part of the solution, rather than a part of the problem* as the current (tenth) bishop of Colombo, the Rt. Rev. C. L. Abeynaike, is so fond of advocating from the pulpit, without putting his precepts into actual practice. perhaps his motives are sound, genuine and sincere enough, but he is prevented from doing what he thinks is correct due to circumstances not of his own making in which he finds himself inextricably enmeshed, and from which he cannot escape. Anyhow one cannot judge motives, only God can read the heart. We can only see the end-results, or the external manifestations. *By their fruits they are judged.*

Even the die-hard, kremlinlike-organised Roman Catholics, who not so long ago considered themselves to be "the true Church of Christ", "the people of God", or "the Lord's chosen flock," began in the late 1950s to send "observers" to attend and comment

upon WCC deliberations and other meetings and conferences of the "separated brethren" and Vatican Council II summoned by Pope John XXIII in 1962 decided to make a thorough study of the whole question of church unity, by taking constructive steps forwards towards making it an ultimate reality.

In fact "good Pope John", the "farmer Pope" or "peasant Pope" brought a breath of fresh air from the wheat-fields from which he hailed, and the rural stock from which he came, and started to "open the stuffy doors and windows of the Vatican to let in the fresh breezes of the Reformation" by setting in motion a chain of events whose ultimate end is hoped to be nothing short of universal union, if possible, before Jesus comes. *That all might be one.*

In Great Britain itself, dialogue was entered into, not only amongst Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, Lutherans and Pentecostals, but also between the Church of England and her traditional "enemy across the border" the Church of Scotland. Anglicans abroad, too, are everywhere uniting with other denominations in their respective nations. In several parts of Africa, for example, not only has the British flag disappeared and the old empire which once occupied about half the surface area of the dark continent, and which empire builders like Herbert Morton Stanley, David Livingstone (1813-1873), Sir Samuel Baker (1821-1893), and Cecil Rhodes (1853-1906) helped to establish, been all but obliterated, but the Anglican Church has either already disappeared or is fast disappearing.

In our great neighbouring sub-continent too, the Church of North and South India, the Church of Pakistan, and the Church of Burma, have supplanted the former Anglican Province of India. Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon; of which one of our kinsman and very own son of the soil Dr. Lakdas de Mel ended a long succession of distinguished, gifted and scholarly metropolitan, which began with the white man. Only the Diocese of Nandyal, for reasons best known to themselves and to God, adamantly remained outside the scheme in spite of all the pressure that was brought to bear upon them to join, perhaps not liking to compromise their cherished though

outdated episcopalian doctrines, and as far as one is aware, is still under the direct jurisdiction of Canterbury.

(To be Concluded)



PADDY PURCHASE— FLASHBACK

'Incentive Payment To Farmers

In the Editor's Notebook last week, there was a reference to a suggestion made by Mr. G. V. S. de Silva in two articles in the *Daily News* of February 11 and 12 in 1974 about incentive payments to paddy farmers—something in the nature of payments made to exporters of non-traditional goods—CRAs which entitled them to purchase hard-to-get imported items. Mr. Silva had suggested a similar kind of payment to paddy farmers. This suggestion had not even been entertained by governmental and bureaucratic circles; instead, draconian measures were imposed to regimentalise paddy farmers. These Regulations have now failed, and Government will do well to consider a scheme of incentive payment to farmers which will entitle them to buy hard-to-get items (even items considered luxuries) on the enhanced payments or special currencies.

One brand of political pundits are totally opposed to material incentives to farmers. They prefer them to be regimentalised and straightjacket them into productive effort. Liu Shao-chi in China was one of those who had believed in material incentives, but Mao Tse-tung did not agree with him. But history may yet show that Liu Shao-chi at least on this one matter, was not far wrong. Russia too had for a long time refused to offer material incentives to farmers and collective farms, but in recent times they have shown tendencies to depart from these old policies and offer material incentives. But even this does not seem to have been enough to effect

an outstanding breakthrough in production. We publish below what we wrote about Mr. G. V. S. de Silva's suggestion in the Tribune of February 23, 1974.

—Ed.

Mr. G. V. S. de Silva makes a concrete suggestion based on what has been done to induce gemmers in this country to sell their gems to a state corporation and not those who smuggle the goods out of the country. What Mr. de Silva suggests has also been done in many socialist countries as an incentive to particular sections of the community which had to contribute something special to the nation's larder. "A fruitful approach to this problem seems to be on the lines of what is presently being done in respect of gems. The payment for gems partly in convertible rupees appears to have succeeded in diverting a fair quantity of these precious stones to the State Gem Corporation. There are undoubtedly many administrative difficulties in the way of operating a similar scheme for paddy particularly because of the multitude of small and scattered transactions that take place in the purchase of that commodity. An even more valid objection could be that a convertible rupee account in a bank may probably not have the same glamour for the simple farmer as it does for the more cosmopolitan gemmer. However even if the convertible rupee account scheme is not quite the answer to the paddy purchasing problem, the solution may well lie in a somewhat parallel direction.

"The essence of the convertible rupee account scheme is the creation of what is virtually a new currency more valuable than the rupee. The value of a currency depends on what could be bought with it. The convertible rupee is valued because it is for many purposes, freely convertible into foreign currencies, and hence could buy a wider range of goods and services than the rupee. Another example of this type of national currency differentiation is found in Socialist countries where workers are given token cards or coupons with which they could buy certain utility commodities cheaper than in the open market. In this case the currency of that country when taken in conjunction with the token card or coupon constitutes vir-

tually a different currency which is more valuable than the normal currency in relation to specific commodities."

Mr. de Silva then amplified on his suggestion and points out that such incentives and hidden currency subsidies already existed in this country. "Or for that matter, in our own country the rupee in association with the rice ration book and the token card is a new currency that has a greater value than the rupee by itself in respect of particular commodities. Thus the convertible rupee account scheme is only one of the possible methods of currency differentiation within a country. If this scheme is not thought suitable for a commodity like paddy another more satisfactory method could be found, provided we were to first decide that some form of internal currency differentiation is necessary to solve the paddy purchasing problem of the Government and even the larger food problem of the country. In this context, the term 'internal currency differentiation' means the simultaneous usage of two (or more) currencies within a country. The new currency could either be the old one in association with special bank accounts, ration books, token cards or coupons or it could be entirely different currency altogether."

SUCH INCENTIVES no doubt will, at least temporarily, tend to create a "privileged" class of person, but there has been no society in history in which there are no "privileged" persons. The slave owner, the capitalist and the landlord have held sway at different times in different countries. The worker and the peasant have in more recent times become privileged persons, but it has more often been the worker (and not the peasant) and the personnel of the party of professional politicians who have been supreme. At the moment, the economic and food situation being what it is in this country, it has become essential to offer certain privileges to the farming community. "The possessor of the new currency becomes a privileged person who is entitled to buy commodities that are not available for purchase with the normal currency, or to buy a specified range of goods at a cheaper price. In concrete terms it means that the farmer

who sells his paddy to the Government would be paid in a new currency which would give him the privilege of buying his agricultural implements, fertilizer and other inputs, textiles, processed food and drinks, bicycles, radios, watches, umbrellas, torches, batteries etc., at special prices. In other words, with the new currency which the Government offers the paddy farmer is sharply differentiated, in terms of the privileged prices at which he could buy his requisites, from the normal rupee currently offered by the private middleman.

"It is clear that the solution to the paddy purchasing problem of the Government does not lie in increasing the rupee price of paddy, for in such a price competition the private middle man could always outbid the Government. Nor is the escalation of rupee prices a solution to the bigger problem of providing an adequate incentive to the paddy farmer, since the higher price he gets for his paddy would be soon eroded by the higher prices he has to pay for his requirements. If we are serious about our intention of subsidising the paddy farmer, then it must be done in a realistic and meaningful way. What matters is not the price of paddy but the purchasing power of the farmer. His purchasing power must be increased and protected against the pressure of rising prices. The method of doing this is to pay him in a new currency which will entitle him to buy his requirements at special prices."

Then Mr. G. V. S. de Silva goes on to discuss the mechanics of the manner in which the special privileges should be extended to the paddy farmer. "What should be the form of the new currency? It could either take the form of a ration card to be used along with the rupee, or it could be a totally different currency altogether. The ration card system is rather cumbersome and rigid in that it is intended to confine the privilege to a particular person. A different currency, on the other hand, is more flexible and extends the privilege to any person who is in possession of that currency. It thus makes the privilege a legally marketable one and consequently a more valuable one. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages, but on balance the latter is preferable in view of the

administrative difficulties and bureaucratic ineptitude that would thwart the implementation of a ration card scheme."

Mr. Silva is also deeply conscious of the ineptitude of the bureaucracy in this island and he displays great anxiety to evolve a scheme which will keep the bureaucrats at bay.

His concrete suggestion is for the creation of a special rupee which he calls *masurama*. In Russia, the special rouble which can buy imported hard-to-get goods at non-blackmarket prices is called colloquially the "golden rouble" and its relationship to the normal rouble is fixed on certain principles. It is something similar to this that Mr. Silva has suggested for Sri Lanka at this juncture of its economic development. "A different currency—let us call it the "Masurama" for convenience—should then be given to the farmer in exchange for his paddy when he sells it to the Government. The *masurama* prices of paddy and of the commodities that farmers buy would have to be determined. To do this we must first decide by what proportion the farmer's purchasing power should be increased. Let us assume for the purpose of illustration that it should be increased by 50 per cent i.e. that with a bushel of paddy a farmer should be able to buy 1½ times the quantity of goods that he can buy now. For example, with paddy at Rs. 25 per bushel and cloth at, say, Rs. 5 per yard, he can buy 5 yards of cloth today with one bushel of paddy. We wish to increase this buying power by 50 per cent—i.e. to enable him to buy not 5 yards but 7½ yards of cloth with one bushel of paddy. We could do so by fixing the price of paddy at M 15 per bushel and of cloth at M 2 per yard. We could also achieve the same result with paddy at M 30 per bushel and cloth at M 4 per yard. Let us take another example, say bicycles. Today, 24 bushels of paddy are required to buy a bicycle priced at, say, Rs. 600. If the farmer's purchasing power is to rise by 50 per cent, the price of a bicycle should be such that he could buy one in exchange for only 16 bushels of paddy. Hence, if the price of paddy is fixed at M 15 per bushel the price of a bicycle should be M 240, and if paddy is priced at

M 30 per bushel a bicycle should be sold for M 480. These examples demonstrate what has been said earlier, what matters is not the absolute price of paddy but the purchasing power of the farmer which depends on the relative prices of paddy and of the commodities."

AFTER GOING into some details about how the masurama rupee will operate in actual market transactions he sums up the conclusions in the following way. "The value of any currency ultimately depends on its commodity backing. The real value of the masurama too will be determined not merely by the arbitrary exchange rate that we choose to fix, but primarily by the ready availability of goods to be bought with it. Hence the village masurama shops (we already have a parallel in the special tourist shops) at which goods, at masurama prices, are available for purchase exclusively with the masurama currency should be adequately stocked with a wide range of urban goods required by the farmers. To ensure this and also that these shops are well managed should be one of the main responsibilities of the Paddy Marketing Board. Some of the goods needed to support the value of the masurama will have to be imported. The foreign exchange necessary for this could come out of the savings on rice imports for distribution through the rationing scheme."

There is no doubt that this suggestion will offend the susceptibilities of many who have so far placed the bureaucrat and the trade unionised urban worker at the apex of the economic pyramid in this country, but unless there is major rethinking on this subject, it will be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for this country to pull itself out of the present mess of economic stagnation.

Mr. de Silva then puts forward the ideological content on which he has based his suggestion and it must be said that there is a great deal to be said for shifting the emphasis from industrial development to large-scale and intensive agricultural development. "It is time that we discarded the dogma that any saving of foreign exchange arising from reduced food imports should be channelled into industrial development. Surely, all-round rural economic development has a higher priority

than narrow urban industrial development, and one of the essential pre-conditions of such rural economic development is a reversal of the terms of trade (i.e. the price relationships) between rural and urban commodities in favour of the rural economy. The strengthening of the value of the masurama by backing it with imported goods is thus an integral part of the development process."

In concluding his second article, Mr. de Silva apologetically explains that he has only set out a brief outline and not a blue print, but his suggestion does not need a blueprint if the top bureaucrats and top planners in this country realise the desirability of up-grading the rural community and intensifying agricultural development. "In this brief outline many questions are bound to have been left unanswered (some, probably not even thought of). This is only a suggestion and not a complete blue-print of a scheme with all the loose ends tied up. It is intended to stimulate some new thinking on the old problem of changing the rural-urban terms of trade in favour of the former. The suggestion made here is based on the view that if such a reversal is to give any real and lasting benefit to the rural people, it should be done in a deflationary manner by reducing the prices of urban goods to them, and not through an inflationary increase of the prices of rural products which is the orthodox doctrine of the apostles of free enterprise."

Even if what Mr. G. V. S. de Silva has suggested is not accepted and acted upon immediately it is something which cannot be discarded altogether or dismissed lightly. There is no doubt that a major emphasis must be enforced in favour of the rural community, and in the mixed economy to which we are committed in the Five Year Plan, private capital and private enterprise have as important a role to play in agricultural development as public sector, state and co-operative undertakings.

At this time, when there are welcome signs of a new rethinking on policies towards paddy farmers, Government will do well to consider some special incentive payments as had been suggested by Mr. G. V. S. de Silva in February, 1974.

BOOK REVIEW

Lesson From India

OUR AGRICULTURAL FUTURE: by Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research—Published by All India Radio, New Delhi, pp. 54. THE PRINTED VERSION of the three Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures delivered by Dr. Swaminathan from October 30 to November 1, 1973 at India International Centre, New Delhi has been released by All India Radio in the form of a booklet running into 53 pages. This publication representing the scholarly and pragmatic stature is of considerable interest. It should be valuable for all who desire to gain a clear insight into the future of our agriculture in the wake of a few good harvests followed by a few bad upsets, due to caprices of weather.

In the concluding para of the booklet, Dr. Swaminathan says that the future of our agriculture depends on the success with which the small and illiterate farmers take the many small steps which alone can lead to a great agriculture. He adds that science can only show the way, but it is for us, the educated and the privileged class, to provide the will. In these words Dr. Swaminathan has unerringly placed his finger on the real nerve centre of agricultural deficiencies and challenges in our country.

The transformation of million of poor, illiterate peasants and agricultural labourers from primitive farming methods into modern, technology-based agriculture cannot be achieved overnight. That such a transformation is the crux of the matter even today, after what many had believed that we had passed through a 'Green Revolution', is an eloquent and authoritative assertion by one who is in the best position to speak for Indian agriculture. Dr. Swaminathan's reference to the educated and privileged class implies that this important segment of our society, as a class, is yet to appreciate the giganticity and complexity of the task before us.

The question naturally arises, whether science has shown the way and whether the educated and privileged class has provided the will, to enable us to march

towards the goal. Dr. Swaminathan has not referred to the vital role that the Governments, including administration, play in assisting the small and illiterate farmers to take the necessary steps. That apart, it will be relevant to see what remains to be done by science and the educated and privileged class to make the small peasants speed up their march to the goal.

IN HIS FIRST LECTURE, Dr. Swaminathan shows how our national liabilities mostly arise from our improper use and management of our resources. He elaborates this with the remark that attempts to promote synergy, which is the only mechanism which can lead to rapid progress from small resources, have been few and halting. He argues that "our urgent needs are first, to develop and introduce in each ecological area an agricultural production technology which will lead to increased productivity based predominantly on the use of renewable resources and on the wise husbanding of non-available resources." For imparting the knowledge and skills to illiterate peasantry and enabling the educated youth to become catalysts of rural change, he wants to develop and introduce appropriate educational tools.

An illustration of the value of the first of these pre-requisites is provided by Kerala's current economy. With about 60 per cent of its cultivated area devoted to horticultural crops, and with bounties of nature in terms of plant life being unexcelled in the State, it is curious to find that, in most horticultural crops for the production of which Kerala is the premier State, such as coconut, banana, cardamom, black pepper as well as in many other relatively less important crops, the average yield in Kerala is below the national average. In some cases such as in banana, the average is only about half of the national average.

In a recent study of 31 Kerala homesteads, which form the aspirations and pride of every Keralite in rural or urban areas, it was also found that the land space available to trees is less than about one-tenth of the optimum. Crowding leads to marked diminution of sunlight, soil moisture and nutrients on one hand, and accentuates the pest and disease incidence on the other. The prevailing features in Kerala's homesteads denote therefore, an amazing instance of wrong investment on plants and

their care, to secure far less than their potentials warrant. The remarks of Prof. Raj and his colleagues quoted by Dr. Swaminathan, that the current crop mix in garden lands of Kerala and Mysore is the product of the technological possibilities as known until now to the people of these areas, is therefore fully borne out. A fresh look, with a fresh technology yet to emerge is, therefore what is needed.

IN HIS SECOND LECTURE dealing with recent developments in agricultural sciences, Dr. Swaminathan lends further support to the implied inference that the most effective land use systems in our heavy rainfall areas is still fragmentary. He is optimistic that with the unravelling of new approaches to improving production, we can hope for continued progress, though he is prudent enough to recognise that the scientists have much to do in these directions. There are others, who have questioned as to why when there has been significant progress in certain areas of research, the progress is still meagre in others. The evolution of pedigree clones in tea and rubber, leading to a marked stepping up of the yields in recent times are examples of the former, and the total absence of any such essential investigational work in other horticultural crops like, mango banana, cardamom, pineapple, cashew, etc., are of the latter.

THE THIRD LECTURE is devoted to a discussion as how the public can be benefited from the emerging knowledge and what approaches are necessary in this regard. It is the plans, policies and administrative features of Governments that are vital, but these are matters which are not covered within the scope of this scholarly treatise by Dr. Swaminathan. **That the poor and illiterate peasant has not been a skilled and efficient partner in adopting the latest scientific advances, such that are available, in admitted. This is inspite of our nation-wide campaigns through extension services, community development and many other similar programmes sponsored by the Governments.**

Whether enlistment of rural parents who are progressive farmers to handle part-time classes to introduce work experience in schools, according academic recognition to work projects of students and involving of university

students in the work of rural development, particularly in appropriate plan projects for two months in a year, would provide the educational tool and infrastructure for agricultural reconstruction or not, is a debatable question.

The merging of individual and social goals, as rightly pointed out by Dr. Swaminathan, has no doubt been possible in communist countries. A very objective and close analysis, if undertaken in our industrial areas and in such rural areas where trade union approach is strong as in Kerala, may disclose what is most desirable in a democratic set-up to secure this goal. Dr. Swaminathan is rightly emphatic on one point. He does not believe that slogans and appeals alone will click, except during national crises.

As indicated earlier, let us not get away with the idea that a national problem of such giganticity and complexity as the transformation of millions of our poor and illiterate peasantry, can be accomplished by easy and effortless methods. If the essence of development is not to make the poor wealthy, but productive, education and training, knowledge and skill, are all essential for ensuring sustained agricultural and economic progress.

Our education, training, and extension programmes are presently in an admittedly unsatisfactory position. The only way to fix the focus on education for the present and the future would be to innovate, so as to be able to deal effectively with the kind of technology that will suit us and to utilise available human resources to the best advantage. The nation-wide acceptance of the agricultural university concept was at one time believed to set our path straight towards progress.

A recent editorial in one of our leading dailies pointed out that, even a few of the North Indian Universities, which at one time, were considered to be leading the way, have belied our hopes, and have become mere show pieces. This is a most disturbing trend, if true. One would hope that Dr. Swaminathan would devote one of his future lectures to discuss the trends in our education and training programmes to assess how our educational tools can be made more effective to ensure and sustain agricultural progress.

K. C. NAIK, Adviser,
Kerala Agricultural University
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Confidentially

The Railways

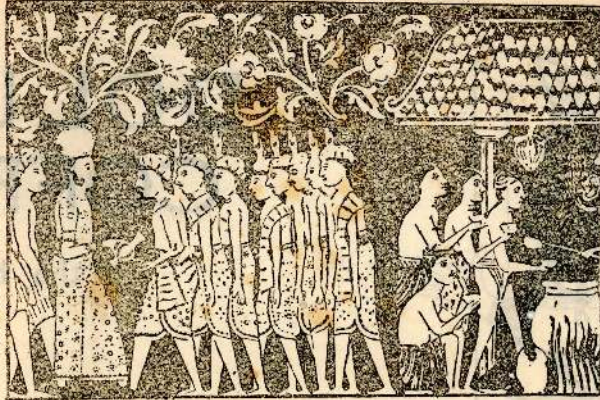
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IS IT NOT TRUE that one of the most important matters that must be examined by Minister KBR and the Committee of Investigation is to probe the proliferation of useless Administrative officers specially created by the last administration? That even God (if there is one) would not know why these posts were created—except if one accepted the premise that they were needed to prepare for the Revolution? That the CGR now boasts of a cadre known as *Public Relations Officers*? That it is difficult to know how many of them had functioned in this capacity? That, so far, cursory investigations by our sleuths reveal that there were at least three who functioned as PROs? That from the commanding heights of being a PRO, favoured persons moved to and from other posts considered important by the hierarchy? That the three persons who had been important PROs at different times came to be known in the CGR as the *Holy Trinity*? (That only evil and vicious minded persons had regarded them as *Unholy*?) That one the strangest bits of coincidence was that these three had the same surname—*de Alwis*? That a special Public Relations Office was set up on the ground floor of the *Railway Control Office*? That this became the meeting place for party activists and centre for all political activity of one brand in the CGR? All *Sevaka Sangamaya* stalwarts (paramilitary toughs) met in this office to plan political and other action? That it is strange that the PRO's office was established in the *Railway Control Office* premises? That in the past, during all times of crisis and emergency (during strikes and other civil disturbance in the country), the *Railway Control Office* was heavily guarded as it was the nerve-centre of all Railway operations? That at such times all Executive Officers—heads of departments, sub-departments and the General Manager—met there to direct Railway operations? That

today elements (members of private trade union armies) and others not connected with the technical operations on the Railway still continue to this day to have this place for their meeting place? That this room is just below the *Railway Control Office* which is, we repeat, the nerve centre of the entire Railway system? That even after the exit of the LSSP Minister the old revolutionary guard assemble there to make their plans? That some (if not all) have now donned blue shirts and wave blue flags? That in spite of this the Minister must move them out to a safe distance from the *Railway Control Office*? That the PRO's office must also be shifted out? That the investigating Committee must find out whether the Railways needs Public Relations Officers? That it must also find out whether Press Relations Officers are also needed? That it is known that there were several persons who went around claiming to be Press Relations Officers or Press Information Officers attached to the CGR (as distinct from those attached to the Ministry)? That it is not known what work they did—apart from warming seats in the PRO's office or entertaining certain favoured news hawks from the daily papers (and the SLBC) at the pubs in the CGR or elsewhere? IS IT NOT ALSO NECESSARY for the Minister and the Committee to see what benefits the CGR has derived from the LSSP making the Railways into an Administrative Himalayas—from being a technical organisation with just enough of administration to make things hum? That the LSSP reforms ensured the conversion of the CGR into a major administrative complex in which the technical departments and sub-departments were made totally and helplessly subordinate to administrative bureaucrats who did not know what they were doing? That all administrative districts and departments in the island (Anuradhapura, Nawalapitiya etc) were brought into Colombo? That the head office was entrusted with all this work which had earlier been wisely decentralised? That in order to accommodate this over-centralisation, the Time Table Section, the Commercial Superintendent's Section (with different sub-branches) and a number of other operating departments were pushed out from the General Managers Office Block? That from the incep-

tion of the Railways, the Commercial Branches, the Accountants Department and the like were in the Head Office block to be available to the General Manager for consultations, planning and operations? That part of the LSSP reform was to *samasamajify* the following administrative branches amongst others—the Staff Branch, the Transfer Branch and the like? That experienced clerks and other officers were transferred out overnight? That party loyalists and henchmen without any experience were brought in? That within a short time the entire administration was fully in the control of the Rasputin to whom the Minister seems to have entrusted the job of running the Railway? That on the first floor of the GMR's office were housed the blue-eyed boys of the Party who made the decisions? They were the new elite (who even gatecrashed into Air Conditioned seats booked by the members of the general public who had bought the tickets for cash)? That this new elite did not bat an eyelid in over-ruling the recommendations of qualified heads of technical departments? That the ground floor of the GMR's office was manned by the second line of the party loyalists? That this administrative superstructure had become so top heavy that an additional General Manager (Administration) was appointed? That in the past there was a General Manager—a technical officer—and also a General Manager (Administration) with a Chief Administrative Officer? That after 1970 there have been three General Managers all of equal rank—or so it seems? That, in spite of this battalion of GMRs, all important decisions were referred to the “invisible” GMR at the Ministry (the Rasputin)? That it was he who made the decisions and gave the orders? That there was really no need for the three GMRs? That if the investigating Committee probed this matter about the Administrative overgrowth with discernment—especially when there was no need for the whole bunch of them because of the “invisible” GMR in actual control—it will be seen that there was a method in the madness? That the public (and the *Tribune*) would not have minded all these political exercises if the Railways had been run better?

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